

IN THE CLAIMS:

The status of each claim that has been introduced in the above-referenced application is identified in the ensuing listing of the claims. This listing of the claims replaces all previously submitted claims listings.

1. (Currently amended) A portable, hand-held system for forming patterns from a sheet of material, comprising:  
a press including first and second members movable toward and away from one another, said first member including a die retaining element associated with a substantially planar, uninterrupted die receiving surface thereof; and  
at least one die securable to said first member by said die retaining element, said at least one die comprising a thin, substantially rigid unitary member including a plate with a planar back side and at least one embossing element continuous with a surface of said plate.
2. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said at least one embossing element protrudes from said surface of said plate.
3. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said press includes a biasing element for moving at least one of said first and second member toward the other of said first and second member.
4. (Original) The system of claim 3, wherein said biasing element includes a pair of pivotally connected handles.
5. (Original) The system of claim 3, wherein said biasing element includes a handle that moves relative to a substantially stationary base.
6. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said die retaining element comprises magnetic material.

7. (Original) The system of claim 6, wherein at least said plate comprises a material that is attracted to a magnetic field.

8. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein said at least one die comprises steel.

9. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein said die retaining element mechanically secures said at least one die to said die receiving surface.

10. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said second member includes at least one of a supporting surface and a receiving die secured thereto and oriented to oppose said die receiving surface.

11. (Previously presented) The system of claim 10, wherein said supporting surface of said second member comprises a cushioning element.

12. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein said at least one die further includes at least one cutting edge protruding from said surface.

13. (Previously presented) The system of claim 12, wherein said at least one die further includes at least one ejection element between adjacent portions of at least one of said at least one embossing element and said at least one cutting edge.

14. (Original) The system of claim 13, wherein said at least one ejection element is compressible and resilient.

15. (Currently amended) A method for forming a pattern from a sheet of material, comprising:  
securing a planar back side of a substantially planar die including a plate and at least one embossing element continuous with ~~a~~ an embossing surface of said plate to a substantially planar, uninterrupted die receiving-securing surface; and  
manually biasing said substantially planar die and ~~a substantially planar sheet supporting an~~ opposed surface located opposite the sheet toward one another ~~and against the sheet by~~ grasping handles of a hand-held embossing apparatus and moving said handles toward one another.

16. (Currently amended) The method of claim 15, wherein said providing comprises securing said substantially planar die with said at least one embossing element protruding from said surface of said plate to said ~~substantially planar die~~ receiving-securing surface.

17. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16, wherein said manually biasing comprises manually biasing said substantially planar die against ~~the sheet and said substantially planar sheet supporting surface~~ a complementary embossing element including at least one recess formed therein and located correspondingly to said at least one embossing element.

18. (Currently amended) The method of claim 15, wherein said manually biasing comprises forcing a member carrying said substantially planar die toward said sheet and said opposed ~~substantially planar sheet supporting surface~~.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein said forcing includes applying force to at least one handle of a press associated with said member.

20. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein said forcing comprises squeezing two handle members of a hand-held press toward one another.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Currently amended) The method of claim 15, wherein said providing said substantially planar die comprises securing a substantially planar die further including at least one cutting edge to said ~~substantially planar die~~ receiving/securing surface.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein said manually biasing comprises cutting said sheet with said at least one cutting edge.

24. (Currently amended) A hand-held system for forming patterns from a sheet of material, comprising:  
a hand-held press including first and second members movable toward and away from one another, said first member including a die retaining element associated with a substantially planar, substantially uninterrupted die receiving surface thereof; and  
at least one die securable to said first member by said die retaining element, said at least one die comprising a thin, substantially rigid, unitary member including a plate with a substantially planar back side and at least one embossing element continuous with ~~a~~ an embossing surface of said plate.

25. (Original) The hand-held system of claim 24, wherein said at least one embossing element of said at least one die protrudes from said surface of said plate.

26. (Original) The hand-held system of claim 24, wherein said second member includes at least one of a supporting surface and a receiving die secured thereto and oriented to oppose said die receiving surface.

27. (Currently amended) A method for forming a pattern from a sheet of material, comprising:  
securing a planar back side of a substantially rigid, substantially planar embossing die including a plate and at least one embossing element continuous with a surface thereof to a  
substantially planar, substantially uninterrupted, die receiving surface; and  
manually biasing said substantially planar embossing die against the sheet and an opposed a  
substantially planar sheet supporting surface located opposite the sheet with a hand-held press.

28. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein said manually biasing comprises squeezing two hingedly connected members of said hand-held press toward one another.

29. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein said manually biasing comprises forming the pattern so as to include at least one embossed portion.

30. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein said manually biasing comprises forming the pattern so as to include at least one cut portion.

31. (Currently amended) A portable, hand-held system for forming patterns from a sheet of material, comprising:  
a press including first and second members moveable toward and away from one another, said first member including a die retaining element associated with a substantially planar, uninterrupted die receiving surface thereof; and  
at least one die securable to said first member by said die retaining element, said at least one die comprising a thin, substantially rigid, unitary member including a plate, at least one embossing element continuous with a front surface of said plate, at least one cutting edge protruding from on said front surface, said at least one embossing element and said at least one cutting edge protruding the same distance from said front surface and at least one

~~ejection element between adjacent portions of at least one of said at least one embossing element and said at least one cutting edge.~~

32. (Canceled)

33. (Original) The system of claim 31, wherein said press includes a biasing element for moving at least one of said first and second member toward the other of said first and second member.

34. (Original) The system of claim 33, wherein said biasing element includes a pair of pivotally connected handles.

35. (Original) The system of claim 33, wherein said biasing element includes a handle that moves relative to a substantially stationary base.

36. (Original) The system of claim 31, wherein said die retaining element comprises magnetic material.

37. (Original) The system of claim 36, wherein at least said plate comprises a material that is attracted to a magnetic field.

38. (Previously presented) The system of claim 31, wherein said at least one die comprises steel.

39. (Previously presented) The system of claim 31, wherein said die retaining element mechanically secures said at least one die to said die receiving surface.

40. (Original) The system of claim 31, wherein said second member includes at least one of a supporting surface and a receiving die secured thereto and oriented to oppose said die receiving surface.

41. (Previously presented) The system of claim 40, wherein said supporting surface of said second member comprises a cushioning element.

42. (Original) The system of claim 31, wherein said at least one ejection element is compressible and resilient.

43. (Currently amended) A die for use with a portable system for forming patterns from a sheet of material, comprising:

a thin, substantially rigid unitary member including a plate with a planar back side and an opposite patterning surface; and  
at least one chemically etched embossing element continuous with ~~a~~ said patterning surface of said plate;  
~~at least one cutting edge protruding from said surface; and~~  
~~at least one ejection element between adjacent portions of at least one of said at least one embossing element and said at least one cutting edge.~~

44. (Currently amended) The ~~system-die~~ of claim ~~43~~51, wherein said at least one ejection element is compressible and resilient.

45. (Currently amended) The ~~system-die~~ of claim 43, wherein said at least one embossing element protrudes from said surface of said plate.

46. (Currently amended) The ~~system-die~~ of claim 43, wherein at least said plate comprises a material that is attracted to a magnetic field.

47. (Currently amended) The ~~system~~die of claim 43, wherein each of said plate, said at least one embossing element, and said at least one cutting edge comprises steel.

48. (New) The system of claim 31, further comprising:  
at least one ejection element between adjacent portions of at least one of said at least one embossing element and said at least one cutting edge

49. (New) The die of claim 43, further comprising:  
at least one cutting edge protruding from said surface.

50. (New) The die of claim 49, wherein said at least one cutting edge and said at least one embossing element protrude substantially the same distance from said patterning surface.

51. (New) The die of claim 49, further comprising:  
at least one ejection element between adjacent portions of at least one of said at least one embossing element and said at least one cutting edge.